



DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

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SPOT COMMENTARY

18 February 1991
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IRAQ-KUWAIT: SITUATION REPORT #581

Political Developments

Bombs Explode at London Train Stations

Bombs exploded at the Paddington and Victoria railway stations in London this morning, according to news accounts. There were no injuries from the Paddington Station bombing, which took place before the station opened. Over 20 people were injured and one was killed in the blast at Victoria, which occurred during rush hour. Police have closed all railway stations in London and are searching for additional explosives. There has been no claim of responsibility for either attack.

Comment: The Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA), which has intensified its terrorist campaign on the British mainland over the past year, may be responsible for the attacks. The group claimed credit for the mortar attack in Whitehall on 7 February, which endangered Prime Minister John Major and the British War Cabinet. If PIRA was responsible, it is unlikely that the attack was Gulf-related; the group will remain wary of identifying itself with Iraq for fear of alienating North American patrons. PIRA is likely to continue attacks in London to embarrass British authorities by proving that it can operate effectively despite stricter, Gulf-related security measures.

Confusion Over India's Refueling Policy

Press reports say Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar today denied that India had stopped refueling US trans port aircraft enroute to the Persian Gulf, although earlier reports suggested the flights had been curtailed on Sunday. Former Prime Minister Gandhi and his Congress-I party asked the government to withdraw permission for refueling on Saturday and threatened to bring the government down if it did not comply, according to press reports.

Comment: The Prime Minister's denials will probably fuel the political crisis that was developing over Congress-I's threats to withdraw its support. Congress-I may fear that New Delhi is

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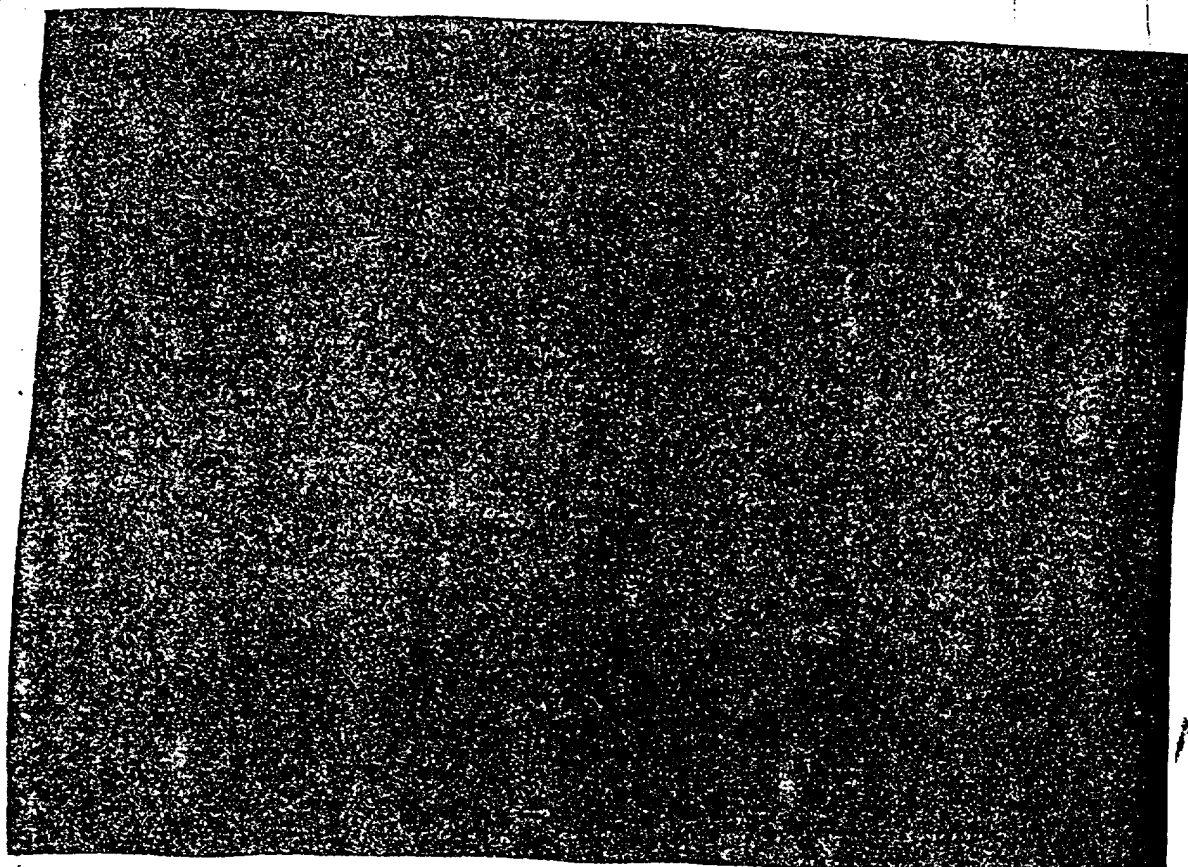
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jeopardizing its chances to play the role of neutral observer in any post war peacekeeping force.

Tariq to Tehran After Moscow

Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz will confer with Iranian officials on his way home from Moscow, according to press reports.

Comment: Aziz met with his Iranian counterpart briefly yesterday on his way to the Soviet Union.



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Exemptions: (b)(1) (b)(3)